

Message Text

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FOR AMB YOUNG FROM UNA

FOLLOWING REPEAT LAGOS 5035 ACTION SECSTATE INFO IBADAN
KADUNA DATED APR 21:

QTE: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LAGOS 5035

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, NI

SUBJECT: STUDENT STRIKE: SITUATION EASES IN LAGOS

REF: (A) KADUNA 506, (B) LAGOS 4920

1. SUMMARY: MOST STUDENTS HAVE DEPARTED UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS (UNILAG) CAMPUS AND SITUATION IN LAGOS APPEARS TO HAVE EASED. AS REPORTED KADUNA'S REF A, SITUATION IN NORTH APPEARS TO HAVE WORSENER. GENERAL FEELING IN LAGOS APPEARS TO BE THAT POLICE OVERREACTED, BUT IT REMAINS UNCLEAR HOW MUCH SUPPORT STUDENTS HAVE FOR THEIR COMPLAINTS. NATIONAL UNIVERSITIES COMMISSION (NUC) HAS REFUSED TO ELIMINATE FEE INCREASE WHICH SPARKED CRISIS. END SUMMARY.

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PAGE 02 STATE 105008

2. UNILAG SENATE (GOVERNING BODY) APRIL 20
ASKED ALL STUDENTS EXCEPT FOREIGNERS TO LEAVE
CAMPUS AND ST MAY 1 FOR RETURN TO CLASSES. EMBASSY
EMPLOYEE WHO VISITED CAMPUS LAST NIGHT REPORTED
THAT MOST STUDENTS HAD LEFT, BUT POLICE PRESENCE
REMAINED HEAVY. WITH DISPERSAL OF STUDENT
PRESENCE, SITUATION IN LAGOS APPEARS TO HAVE EASED.

AT SAME TIME REPORTS FROM KADUNA (REF A) INDICATE THAT SITUATION AT AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY (ABU) IN ZARIA WAS SERIOUS ON APRIL 20. LAGOS PRESS REPORTS THAT INCIDENTS TOOK PLACE IN CONTEXT OF EFFORT TO DISPERSE STUDENTS FROM CAMPUS. IF STUDENTS DID LEAVE ABU CAMPUS AND RETURN HOME WE ASSUME SITUATION THERE MAY ALSO EASE SOMEWHAT.

3. REPORTS FROM VARIOUS SOURCES INDICATE THAT STUDENT BOYCOTT AND POLICE/STUDENT CONFRONTATION AFFECTED A NUMBER OF UNIVERSITIES AROUND NIGERIA--IBADAN, ILORIN, BENIN, NSUKKA, CALABAR. IT IS ALSO CLEAR THAT THERE WERE DIVISIONS WITHIN STUDENT RANKS. JUNIOR AND SENIOR STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITY OF CALABAR ISSUED STATEMENT APRIL 20 DISASSOCIATING THEMSELVES FROM NATIONAL UNION OF NIGERIAN STUDENTS (NUNS) EFFORTS TO BOYCOTT CLASSES AND APPEALED FOR POLICE PROTECTION TO ALLOW THEM TO RETURN TO CLASSES. IN A SIMILAR CONFRONTATION AT NSUKKA, VIOLENCE REPORTEDLY ERRUPTED BETWEEN STUDENT FACTIONS AND FORMER PRESIDENT OF NUNS WAS HOSPITALIZED AS A RESULT OF INJURIES FROM STUDENTS FAVORING BOYCOTT.

4. THERE IS A WIDESPREAD IMPRESSION THAT POLICE HAVE OVER-REACTED TO SITUATION. IN BOTH PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS AND PUBLIC STATEMENTS THIS THEME HAS BEEN REPEATED A NUMBER OF TIMES.
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PAGE 03 STATE 105008

ONLY EDITORIAL COMMENTS WE HAVE SEEN TO DATE, IBADAN BASED TRIBUNE AND SKETCH, CARRIED THIS THEME. WHILE CRITICIZING POLICE, TRIBUNE ALSO SYMPATHIZED WITH STUDENT DEMANDS.

5. NUC HAS MAINTAINED ITS POSITION AND DR. JIBRIL AMINU, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF COMMISSION, MADE STATEMENT LAST NIGHT THAT "THERE ARE NO PLANS WHATSOEVER TO ALTER THE REVISION OF FEES...IT IS THE LEGITIMATE RIGHT AND RESPONSIBILITY OF ANY UNIVERSITY TO CHARGE FEES. WE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW OF ANY UNIVERSITY WHERE STUDENTS WOULD DETERMINE WHETHER THEY WOULD PAY FEES OR NOT, AND HOW MUCH FEES THEY WOULD BE PREPARED TO PAY." AT SAME TIME HE ANNOUNCED THAT NUC HAD INVITED THE COMMITTEE OF VICE CHANCELLORS (UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTS) TO MEET TO SEEK A LONG TERM SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM. INDEFENDING 300 PERCENT INCREASE IN FEES. AMINU NOTED INTER ALIA THAT ABOUT 60 PERCENT OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AND ABOUT 80 PERCENT OF MEDICAL STUDENTS WERE ON SCHOLARSHIPS.

6. COMMENT: IF OTHER UNIVERSITIES ARE

CLOSED AN STUDENTS SUCCESSFULLY DISPERSED, IT IS
LIKELY THAT SITUATION WILL EASE SOMEWHAT. WE
NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT NUNS PRESIDENT HAS CALLED FOR
MEETING IN LAGOS TOMORROW TO DECIDE STRATEGY
FOR STUDENT ACTIVITY. WYMAN UNQTE VANCE

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